

covenant in Jesus Christ, the route back to the new creation. The final chapter of the book justifies the theology of natural law as a necessary point of engagement for Christians with implications for modern-day politics, law, justice, and religious liberty.

This is a massive volume, theologically profound and with an deep understanding of Scripture's rich diversity. It occupies an important place in bridging the gap between evaluations of biblical theology from systematicians and from biblical theologians. Its theology of covenant is profound and convincing.

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Lebenskunst und Gotteslob in Israel: Anregungen aus Psalter und Weisheit für die Theologie. By HERMANN SPIECKERMANN. Pp. x + 500. (Forschungen zum Alten Testament, 91.) Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014. ISBN 978 3 16 151915 4. €119.

THE contents of this book are as follows:

Vorwort. Lebenskunst und Gotteslob, 1–37.

- I. LEBENSKUNST ZWISCHEN KAIROS UND KRISIS: DIE WEISHEIT. 1. Bildung-Gottesfurcht-Gerechtigkeit: Die Prologe der Weisheitsbücher, 41–54. 2. Lebenskunst als Wegkunde: Proverbien, 55–79. 3. Die Satanisierung Gottes: Hiob, 80–92. 4. Suchen und Finden: Kohelet, 93–115. 5. Der betende Weise: Jesus Sirach, 116–40. 6. Der Gerechten Seelen sind in Gottes Hand: Sapientia Salomonis, 141–64. 7. Theologie als Philosophie: Das vierte Makkabäerbuch, 165–83.
- II. GOTTESLOB ZWISCHEN NACHT UND TAG: DER PSALTER. 1. Gott und die Nacht: Gottes Welt und das Chaos, 187–96. 2. Der theologische Kosmos des Psalters: Gottes Thron in der Welt des Betens, 197–216. 3. Rede Gottes und Wort Gottes: Die Entdeckung der Antwort Gottes im Gebet, 217–31. 4. Schweigen und Beten: Von

stillem Lobgesang und zerbrechender Rede im Psalter, 232–46. 5. Hymnen im Psalter: Ihre Funktion und ihre Verfasser, 247–69. 6. Lob Gottes aus dem Staube: Psalm 103 als Quintessenz der Theologie des Gotteslobes, 270–85. 7. Lieben und Glauben: Psalm 116 als Schlüssel zur Theologie des Gebetes, 286–99.

- III. ALTTESTAMENTLICHE THEOLOGIE ALS GOTTESLOB UND LEBENSKUNST. 1. Das heutige Bild der Religionsgeschichte Israels: Eine Herausforderung alttestamentlicher Theologie?, 303–23. 2. Yhwh gehört die Welt: Religionsgeschichtliche Voraussetzungen alttestamentlicher Theologie, 324–42. 3. Gott im Gleichnis der Welt: Die weisheitliche Wurzel alttestamentlicher Theologie, 343–60. 4. Schöpfung, Gerechtigkeit und Heil: Der Horizont alttestamentlicher Theologie, 361–80. 5. Der nahe und der ferne Gott: Das Spannungsfeld des Gotteslobes, 381–97. 6. Gott und Mensch am Markt: Das Spannungsfeld der Lebenskunst, 398–417. 7. Der Retter ist nah: Die Verheißung alttestamentlicher Theologie, 418–36.

Literatur, Bibelstellen und Sachregister.

‘Diese Verse sind eine Erinnerung an Israels Weisheit’ (These verses commemorate Israel’s wisdom) is the first sentence of Hermann Spieckermann’s *Lebenskunst und Gotteslob in Israel*. It summarizes a piece of poetry by Berthold Brecht, versifying on the legendary King Solomon. The present volume is another contribution to commemorate Israel’s wisdom—and to show how it can still inspire contemporary theology.

The volume comprises three sets of seven articles by Hermann Spieckermann focusing on wisdom literature, the Psalms, and Old Testament theology. Most of the articles have already been published in different books and journals in the previous decade and have been thoroughly revised to fit the overall concept of the book. The articles under I.2 and I.5 have not been published before.

The collection is intended to contribute to theology as a whole by addressing questions of Old Testament theology, an endeavour that is as essential as much as it is difficult. Spieckermann has already shown his interest in interdisciplinary theological discussion in previous publications, most impressively in *Der Gott der Lebendigen: Eine biblische Gotteslehre* (Tübingen,

2011), a courageous dialogue with his New Testament colleague Reinhard Feldmeier.

Lebenskunst und Gotteslob in Israel starts with an overture, which forms an overview of the following contributions. It introduces the reader to the protagonists of Old Testament wisdom literature in its ancient context and sketches their importance for theological concepts—not only in antiquity but for our contemporary discourse on questions of God, man, and world as well. Due to its architecture, the volume can be read as a kind of triptych. Chapters 1 and 2 present multifaceted insights into Wisdom and the Psalter that are closely interrelated and contribute to the central questions and strains of Old Testament theologies (ch. 3). The ensemble is supplemented by a bibliography and two indexes.

In a short review it is not possible to adequately recognize all the contributions of such a volume. As one main concern of the author is to show how ‘wisdom and prayer’ bear on each other, are brought together, and enrich each other in the late Old Testament texts he discusses, this review will focus on the main lines of this reciprocity as it proceeds through the triptych of wisdom, the Psalter, and Old Testament theology.

The seven essays on wisdom start with an analysis of the three prologues of Proverbs, Ben Sira, and the Wisdom of Solomon. The following articles discuss key aspects of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes, finding a climax in I.5, an essay on the book of Ben Sira as a ‘sum of Jewish theology’. The author compellingly shows how Ben Sira moulds highly sophisticated theological reasoning and the praise of God into a unity of ‘wisdom and prayer’, showing their reciprocal dependency. Spieckermann’s inclusion of the Wisdom of Solomon and 4 Maccabees—both notoriously underestimated, especially in Protestant theology—into his studies deserves particular appreciation, as these writings cover important links to the New Testament and essentially broaden the horizon of biblical wisdom literature.

The wisdom section ends with a hint at the importance of martyrdom for 4 Maccabees as an extreme test of faith—the Psalter section starts with an essay on Israel’s multiple experience of vulnerable faith in ‘God and night’. All articles broach the question of divine–human communication and thus address different ‘modes of speech’, exuberant praise as well as silence, within the Psalter. Within the review’s focus on ‘wisdom and prayer’, chapter II.6 deserves special attention. Under the heading ‘Lob Gottes aus dem Staube’ (God’s praise from the dust) it presents Ps. 103 as ‘Quintessenz der Theologie des Gotteslobes’

(quintessence of a theology of God's praise). Being one of the late texts from the Hebrew Psalter, Ps. 103 shows (similar to what has been demonstrated in the chapter on wisdom) characteristics of concentrating theological insights, elementary human experiences of the contingent, and the hope for God's righteousness and mercy.

The theologically and anthropologically dense texts presented in chapters 1 and 2 form the foundation on which the third chapter can draw as, to stay within our chosen imagery, the central piece of our triptych.

Addressing the question of Old Testament theology—an endeavour which, given the nature of the material, cannot but remain an approximation—has become essential in a time which challenges Old Testament scholars to communicate the historical and hermeneutical tasks assigned to them by the object of their study to an extent hitherto unknown. Thus chapter 3 starts with two studies on the relations between the history of religion and Old Testament theology and branches out in five contributions to different aspects of God's history with his people and mankind as testified by Old Testament texts. These contributions are again connected through the focal points 'wisdom and prayer'. The last essay points to the perspective of Old Testament theology as a theology of promise that does not merge into fulfilment (which would render the promise obsolete), but is in itself indispensable for the investigative horizon of this volume: Christian biblical studies.

A volume with such a wide range of material offers an abundance of detailed questions to be discussed. As a matter of course, an author has to establish certain priorities while leaving aside other issues of interest. A single review is not able to present this in detail.

It is to be hoped as well as expected that Hermann Spieckermann's collection *Lebenskunst und Gotteslob* will meet with the broad reception it deserves, encouraging theologians (in a broad sense) to engage with large-scale questions, as well as with historical and philological details, in order to retrace God's history with humankind as a history of 'wisdom and prayer', of 'Gotteslob und Lebenskunst', as the last chapter suggests.